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Partnership allows Garrett students to enjoy hands-on science

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GARRETT — Garrett Middle and High School students will be able to enjoy hands-on science lessons thanks to a partnership with Science Central and Eaton Corp.

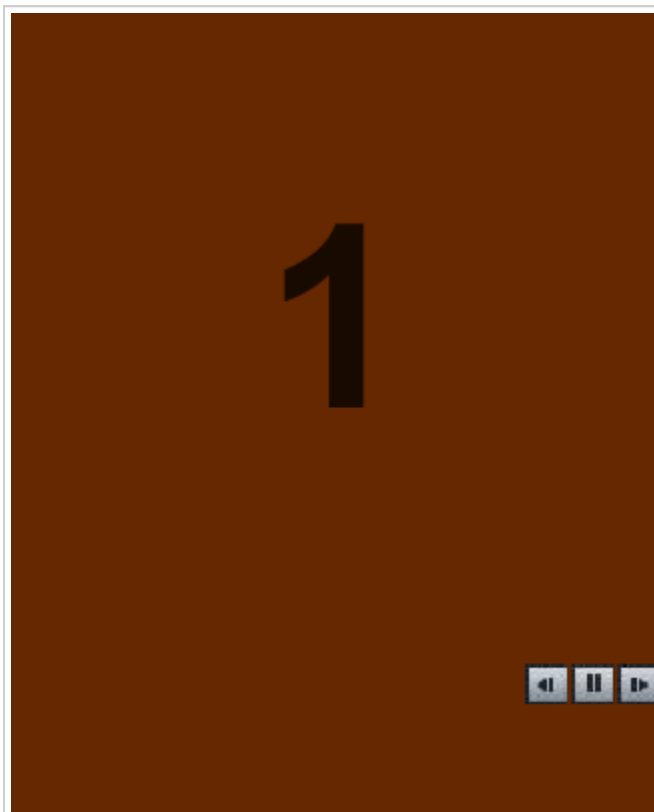
Science Central and Eaton announced the partnership Friday during a news conference at the Science Central museum in Fort Wayne.

Through its corporate foundation, Eaton has awarded the Garrett-Keyser-Butler school district with a \$15,000 grant that will be used to provide technology labs and field trips to all fifth, sixth- and seventh-grade classes in the school corporation, explained Donna Cheek of Eaton Corp.

The Eaton Corp. foundation also provided a \$30,000 to help support Project Lead the Way at Garrett High School last month. Project Lead the Way is a pre-engineering program sponsored by the Indiana Department of Education. Project Lead the Way classes are modelled after introductory engineering courses taught at the college level. Through the partnership, Eaton engineers serve as mentors to students, share insight into the field of engineering, offer demonstrations with on-the-job engineering equipment, and provide on-the-job internships, if possible.

Science Central outreach manager Jenny Young said the labs will visit each Garrett Middle School classroom twice a year. The students also will enjoy career-based field trips to the Eaton plant in Auburn and to Science Central, she added.

The programs will include topics such as bridge building, robots, catapults and GPS systems. Engineers



from Eaton will volunteer and share their expertise with students in a classroom setting. Engineers will visit the middle school Tuesday to begin a bridge-building project, Cheek added.

Eaton engineer Jim Larsen said the company identified a need to get youngsters interested in science and engineering. Through the partnership, middle and high school students will receive opportunities to prepare them from the Project Lead The Way program offered at Garrett High School.

Cheek said more than 45 engineers from the Auburn plant will serve as volunteers and a resource for teachers and students in the classrooms both at Garrett Middle School and Garrett High School.

"We are very excited to be working with Eaton, to be able to meet our mission of providing interactive science programs to the community, " said Martin Fisher, executive director at Science Central.

Garrett Middle School principal Linda DePew said, "We're very excited about this opportunity for our students and are appreciative of Eaton making this available."

About 80 students are currently enrolled in pre-engineering programs begun last fall at the high school. Up to 12 hours of classwork will be credited toward progress certification.

Eaton Corporation solicited grants that would be in line with the company's business strategy, Cheek said. "Garrett's program was a "good fit."

Superintendent Dennis Stockdale hopes to partner with businesses and industries in the area to get more engineers involved and to help improve the infrastructure of engineering courses at the school, he said.

Larsen also invited engineering students to use the Auburn plant's materials testing lab to help with courses during a recent visit to the high school.

Garrett schools began investigating Project Lead the Way information about a year ago. It was a program Stockdale was familiar with prior to coming to Garrett last year.

"This course fits our mission to do for all kids, through project-based learning in new technologies high schools," Stockdale said. "We were doing Project Lead the Way all along, but not getting credit for it."

Stockdale said the school is also encouraging females to get into engineering classes.

Indiana is one of the states with the most high schools in the program, according to Stockdale. It began with six, and now numbers more than 200 in the state.

"We hope to put out good workers for you - to groom them for work," Stockdale told Eaton representatives visiting the school in January.

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